

The Healthy Workforce Initiative:
exploring the benefits of
integrating health protection
and health promotion

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NIOSH Mission

- To provide national and world leadership to prevent work-related illnesses and injuries.

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

The sole federal government organization charged with conducting occupational safety and health research.

Background

- Work and health are inextricably intertwined.
- Health care costs are high...and rising (faster than wages, faster than inflation)
- Most common cause of labor-management conflict in the last decade: **health benefits**

Background

- Personal risk perception/assessment and willingness to respond depends on life context
- Health risk from work and adverse health risk behaviors are unevenly distributed through the working population—but are often found together
- Approaches to workplace *health protection* and *health promotion* for people who work are usually disconnected

Motivators

- NIOSH-sponsored national workshop on Work, Smoking, and Health
- HHS Steps to a Healthier US
- CDC Healthier Worksite Initiative
- Stakeholder interest
 - ACOEM Initiative/consensus statement
 - GM, UAW, DOL, J&J, etc.
- Planning workshop
- Recent research

Observational Evidence Favoring Integration

- ...job demands like shift work, piece work, hazardous exposure, and physical load tended to be associated with smoking and sedentary behavior, whereas job resources, including personal autonomy were predictive of regular exercise...

Johansson, G. et al. (1991) Smoking and sedentary behavior as related to work organization. Soc Sci Med 32:837-846

Intervention Research Favoring Integration

- Smoking quit rates among blue collar workers in an integrated program more than doubled in comparison to those in the HP only group (OR = 2.13, $p = 0.04$)
- BC workers quit smoking more often and stayed off more often when HP was combined with OHS.
- Integrated interventions also resulted in reduced fat and increased fruit and vegetable consumption in manufacturing workers

Sorenson, G. et al. (2002) A comprehensive worksite cancer prevention intervention: behavior change results from a randomized controlled trial (United States). *Cancer Causes and Control* **13**: 493-502.

Sorensen, G. et al. (1998) The effects of a health promotion-health protection intervention on behavior change: the WellWorks Study. *AmJPH* 88:1685-1690.

Disparities in protection support integrated approaches

“Although over three fourths of white collar workers are covered by smoke-free policies...just 43% of 6.6 million food preparation and service occupations workers benefit from this level of protection.”

Shopland D., et al. (2004) Disparities in Smoke-Free Workplace Policies Among Food Service Workers. JOEM 46:347-356

Goal

Enable better health for people who
work—

Improve prevention through integration
of health protection and promotion

Barriers to Integration

- Fragmentation of the health care system
- Separation between health promotion and health protection responsibilities
- Stakeholder & professional silos
- Isolated scientific communities
- Limited funding for intervention effectiveness (prevention) research

Barriers to Integration

- Limited scientific evidence of benefits
- Lack of coordination among Federal agencies
- Regulatory versus voluntary approaches
- Lack of services for those at highest risk

National Symposium, Washington DC, October 2005

Steps to a HealthierUS WORKFORCE



Symposium Co-sponsors & Supporters (partial listing)

- J&J
- UAW-DELPHI Partnership
- IBM
- Laborers H&S Fund of NA
- ACOEM
- ORC Worldwide
- AOEC
- CPWR
- Alabama Power
- UCLA Center for OEH
- AAOHN
- AIAG
- Partnership for Prevention
- NSC
- AIHA
- Dana Farber Cancer Inst.
- ICOH
- APA
- SOPHE
- ASSE
- DOL/OSHA
- VPPPA
- CDC/NCCDPHP
- CDC/EPO
- NIH/OD
- CDC/NCICP
- PAHO

Key messages from the Symposium

- Healthy workplaces promote a healthier workforce
- Interventions promoting health at work should focus preferentially on those in attendance—sustain health, don't fight disease
- Excessive focus on economic justification can be problematic
- Everything adversely affecting health is not a “lifestyle choice”

More Symposium Messages

- Expand the science base relating to integration
- Examples of excellence abound—capture and communicate them
- Use language thoughtfully—(e.g., “targeting”)
- Different audiences need different information communicated differently

N E X T S T E P S

The NIOSH Healthy Workforce Initiative

Our goal is to promote and protect the health and safety of people who work through comprehensive programs and policies for prevention of workplace-related fatalities, illness, injuries and personal health risks.

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/steps/>



HWI Implementation

- Support research
- Identify and communicate effective policies
- Promote best practices
- Engage in productive partnerships

For Additional Information

- NIOSH Website
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh>
- Steps Topic Page
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/steps/>